

Vivian's Story

Vivian is a single mother of five children. She worked diligently to keep her family together and upbeat during their stay at the House of Hope. She entered our program hoping for a chance to rectify negative monetary decisions that she had made, but she wasn't sure whether "shelter life" would cause her family heartache and embarrassment. Her children were accustomed to mom always making everything okay, but ultimately this pressure had led to her making poor financial decisions and their homelessness. On the whole, the kids did very well in the House of Hope program. Shortly after admission, her 18-year-old daughter began college. The next oldest two children stayed busy with school activities as well as babysitting jobs, and the younger ones were engaged in the many activities at the House of Hope. During the day, Vivian dropped the kids off at school and daycare, respectively, and she maintained 40 hours of work per week through two jobs. One job counted toward her community service hours in order to continue social service benefits while the other was a paid part-time job, both here in Englewood. Most importantly for her self-sufficiency, she also made positive financial decisions in the program, even when it demanded sacrifice on the part of the family. This was demonstrated through her ability to save the recommended percentage of her income, and it left her with enough money for their immediate needs as well as emergency funds to fall back on in case times got rough again. Finally, her housing contacts resulted in the family's admission to a longer-term transitional housing program. In the end, the family even learned that living in a shelter wasn't so bad after all ... it was a nice place to visit but you wouldn't want to live there always.

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